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PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

Buckingham Palace

saw a great deal of coming and going last week. The King and Queen left town at the beginning of the week and motored down to Brocket Hall to pay a three days' visit to Lord and Lady Mount Stephen. This they always did when Prince and Princess of Wales, and nearly always during the fortnight preceding Christmas. The present Lady Mount Stephen, both since her marriage and before it, when she was Miss Gian Tufnell, is an intimate friend of Queen Mary. At one time she used to spend many months of every year with Lady Wolverton at Coombe Warren, near Kingston, and consequently in the neighbourhood of White Lodge, our Queen's home when Princess Mary of Teck.

Brocket Hall is rented by Lord Mount Stephen from Lord Walter Kerr, whose late wife, Lady Amabel Kerr, succeeded to the property at the death of her brother, the last Lord Cowper.

Royalty visited Brocket many decades ago when in the year after marriage Queen Victoria and Prince Albert spent some days there as the guests of the then Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne.

Among those bidden to meet their Majesties at Brocket Hall last week were the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lord Lichfield, Lord Cavan (whose home, Wheathampstead House, is not far distant from Brocket Hall), Lord Roberts, and Lord Elphinstone.

The King and Queen returned to Buckingham Palace on Thursday. During their absence the Prince of Wales had arrived from Dartmouth and Prince Albert from Osborne. Both Princes will accompany their parents to Portsmouth in January, when the Royal party will spend some days there, making the *Victoria and Albert* their headquarters.

The King and Queen of Norway, with Prince Olaf, spent a night at Buckingham Palace last week, previous to their departure for Norway.

Events of Interest.

Lady Crewe has been spending the last few months at Crewe Hall quite quietly, but is coming to town shortly after Christmas, in expectation of an interesting event. Lord Crewe has three daughters by his first marriage, all of whom are married, and in each case have made him a grandfather, though he continues to look young for the part. He is a most popular person, and his wedding to Lady "Peggy" Primrose, nearly twelve years ago was quite the event of that season. Their many friends hope that an heir to the title will appear in due course. Lady Crewe's only sister, Lady Sybil Grant, is the mother of a little boy, and so is her sister-in-law, young Lady Dalmeny, whose small son is just three months old.

Lady Fitzwilliam is also taking things quietly just now, and here again a son is greatly desired. Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam are the parents of four daughters, remarkably pretty children, as were their mother and her brothers and sister in their day. They used to spend much of their time at their Yorkshire home, Aske, near Richmond, with their parents, Lord and Lady Zetland, and it was the prettiest thing to see them all arriving at the various meets in the neighbourhood with their father, the M.F.H., while Lady Zetland followed the hounds in her little phæton, drawn by four tiny ponies.

The eldest daughter, Lady Hilda Dundas, married Lord Southampton, who was Master of the Woodland Pytchley for some four seasons, and the younger, Lady Maud, married Lord Milton when still in her teens. He succeeded his grandfather a few years later.

There were many flower-lovers to be seen at the Carnation Show held recently at the Horticultural Hall in Vincent Square, Westminster. The Duchess of Wellington was there wearing furs with her black velvet gown, and with her was her daughter, Lady Evelyn James, in a long fur coat and a wide toque bordered with fur to match. Baroness Daisy de Brienen, in brown, was with Lady Kathleen Pilkington—who is almost as much interested in flowers as she is in dogs—and Lady Blythswood, all in black, was with Lady Du Cane.

There have been several interesting engagements announced recently.

MISS IRIS HOEY
Who is to appear in the Lyceum pantomime, "Cinderella"

MISS PAULINE CHASE
Who re-appears at the Duke of York's as Peter in "Peter Ian"

GOWNS AND GOSSIP:

THE VOGUE FOR SIMPLICITY.

My Best Friend—Whatever the cause may be, there is a sudden demand for coats and frocks of puritanical simplicity at the present time. I went to a private view last week with a friend, and many of the women were wearing quite plain long coats, guileless of trimming, excepting for a few buttons and a square-cut rever of velvet or satin. When in imagination you add to such a toilet a plain silk or velvet hat, decked with a solitary silver or dull gilt ornament, you certainly will admit that the greatest Spartan could scarcely demand a less frivolous garb. This desire for simplicity is probably only a passing phase, but those of us whose business it is to watch the little trends of fashion are amused by these transient fancies, coming especially at such a moment when there is an undoubted effort on the part of many to bring us back to more intricate and complicated shapes and constructions. The modern woman is, however, quite right in one thing, and that is that she assuredly looks better in plain coats and gowns, always provided they be properly cut. The rich woman can always achieve a successful plain frock, and the lucky possessor of the "ready-made figure," who is born for stock size garments, can do so too, for ready-to-wear clothes are most beautifuly cut in these latter days. However, we all know more about the art of cutting than we did, and even "Miss Minchin" can do wonders if she is not too proud to use the invaluable paper pattern.

I send you with this letter a sketch of what a friend of mine calls a coat-dress, and this being interpreted means a well-fitting kind of cassock, with buttons all the way down one side, and a complete absence of frivolity in the shape of decoration. This dress in a bright purple cloth or coating would look very nice; and the rever might be of soft satin or of cloth, while the buttons could be edged with velvet or satin, according as your fancy selects. There is one little point about this particular design which may be indicative of a coming change, and that is the presence of a pocket. You will see that the skirt is attached to the bodice proper, and it is at that point that the pocket is introduced. How extremely thankful we shall all be if only we may be allowed a proper receptacle for our handkerchief! I suppose that if I were a handkerchief manufacturer I should oppose the advent of the pocket as much as possible, for we have all suffered considerably from the pocketless craze, and I never remember to have bought so many handkerchiefs as I have lately.

As regards the Puritan frock, numbers of these are made with quite long over skirts or tunics with perhaps a narrow band of fur round the base, and many of the bodices are just like the old-fashioned *bébé* bodice of twenty odd years ago, with a strip of embroidery down the front or a piece cut out square to show a plaque of embroidery. But where is our friend the frill or the furbelow? So far as I can see, it is hiding its diminished head.

A friend of mine has just sent me over some sketches from Paris of evening gowns, and amongst seven models there is not one which does not show the tunic developed in one form or another, though the transparent tunic is over in Paris, so they say. The trimmings may be of *brodérie d'or*, of silver lace, or jet embroidery, but the form remains the same, as simple as it can possibly be. I cannot say myself that I admire the backs of the evening gowns invariably, and I am convinced that it is a mistake for big or stout women to try and do without a little flow to their skirts. I saw a lovely black satin the other night, which, though of the approved straight persuasion, had just a suspicion of fulness in the middle of the back, and the tunic of jetted net, was pulled round from the front and was tied in two ends at the back of the skirt, an idea which we might repeat in quantities of different materials.

A coat dress of cloth, showing the new pocket

I have really seen some sorry spectacles in the shape of ladies of ample proportions wearing tunics gathered into bands of embroidery, and all the talking in the world does not seem capable of convincing certain dear souls that we must lead fashion captive up to a certain extent, and not allow her to set a seal upon any disproportion of which we may be the unhappy possessor. There is so much latitude and individualism about dress at the moment that we can all take courage in our hands and add a straight length of material to the back of our frock, if we find that by so doing we gain an added gracefulness, and the little trains of the present day are so fantastic that whatever we do will be accorded a good reception provided it be cleverly done.

Such numbers of my friends are just off to spend Christmas in the Swiss heights, and their outfit is almost as elaborate as a trousseau. They have skating and ski-ing suits of knitted wool, and very fine gaiters to pull up over their stockings right above the knee when the weather is pitilessly cold, while the hand-knitted sports knickers and long gloves are also taken for various occasions and changes of temperature. Some women look most charming in this kind of attire. The girl with fuzzy curly hair and bright eyes never looks more attractive than in a sleighing hood, especially if it be lined with a little soft bit of Japanese silk, and the long knitted coats are ever so much smarter than they were, for they are so shapely and well put together.

Several of my friends have written to me to ask if I know anything about the wear of the knitted skirts. I cannot say that I do from personal experience, but I hear that they are woven so that they will not sag and get out of shape. Of one thing I am quite convinced, and that is that any of us who want to go to Switzerland and enjoy ourselves will do well to give our toilet some serious consideration. One girl of my acquaintance has taken out a purple shrunk frieze skirt, with knitted coat and cap, and a white frieze skirt, coat and cap, as well as her last year's grey kit. Of course boots are a heavy item in the expenditure of a winter sports outfit, for they must be good in quality, as well as being comfortable and becoming. Girls who go out with just ordinary boots will only experience dismal disappointment.

Certainly three weeks up in the Swiss mountains is a delightful change if one goes with a jolly party. It is not amusing, however, to go to one of the big hotels unless one intends to link up to other friends staying there. Good light blanket cloth coats are also wanted, but nothing in the least heavy or cumbersome will be appreciated.

The elections have kept many people from starting as early as they intended, so that during the last few days before Christmas the exodus will be upon a gigantic scale. So far as I am concerned, I prefer to stay at home, and go later on when the rush is over. Simple dance frocks are required, as, in spite of all that goes on by day, there are a good many small festivities which take place at night. It is a good plan to put a head dress or a fancy dress into one's box, because head parties and a mild form of *bal masqué* are popular in many of the hotels.

After the floods we have endured lately, a little freezing would be stimulating; and to wake up in the morning and find a bright sun sparkling upon a dry, white world would dissipate anybody's dull care, I should think.

And now good-bye for to-day,

Ever yours, LYDIA LOVELACE.

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